

Fosdick (S) Jr.

MR. FOSDICK'S
THANKSGIVING SERMON,
ON
TEMPERANCE.

1846,

Scriptural Temperance.

A

S E R M O N ,

DELIVERED IN THE HOLLIS STREET MEETING-HOUSE, BOSTON,

ON

THANKSGIVING DAY,

NOV. 26, 1846.

BY

DAVID FOSDICK, JR.

MINISTER OF HOLLIS STREET SOCIETY.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

BOSTON:

W. WARLAND CLAPP & SON.

1846.

32598

Emotional

SEERMON

PREACHED IN THE HOLY COMMUNION

THANKSGIVING DAY

NOV. 20, 1846

BY

DAVID LIVINGSTON, JR.

MINISTER OF THE HOLY COMMUNION

THROUGH BY REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY

BOSTON:

H. WATKINS CLARK & SON.

1846.

PREFACE.

THE author of the present sermon foresees, of course, that he will be censured by some persons as laggard and recreant in the work of true Reform, to which he professes himself a hearty well-wisher. You find fault with what others are doing, it may be said; why do you not propose something of your own? This is a common criticism upon those who take exception to actual methods. I reply first, Better do nothing than do wrong. Are there any who say, Doing nothing is doing wrong. I reply, It may be so; but that is no excuse whatsoever for doing wrong. Do something, if duty requires, but do it rightly. Very fervent men are quite too apt to think that nothing is done, unless their favorite course is pursued. To a discreet mind it will, I think, be fully apparent, that the most solid means of influence in favor of Reform are all admissible without contravention of the principles exhibited in this sermon.

In order to show fairly, and if possible beyond cavil, the style of sentiment in which many indulge, the following pages often contain express citations from two Discourses, both published within a few months, one entitled: "*A Sermon of War*, preached at the Melodeon, on Sunday, June 7, 1846, by Theodore Parker, minister of the 28th Congregational Church in Boston," and the other: "*A Sermon of the Perishing Classes in Boston*, preached at the Melodeon on Sunday, Aug. 30, 1846," by the same gentleman. Whatever language of the present sermon is included between *single* marks of quotation is cited, it is believed exactly and justly, from one or the other of these productions. Words cited from other sources appear with the ordinary *double* marks of quotation.

D. F. JR.

BOSTON, DEC. 3, 1846.

S E R M O N .

TEXT : I. COR., IX., 25.—“ TEMPERATE IN ALL THINGS.”

THE proper meaning of terms is very often narrowed and perverted by the usage of particular places, times, sects, and parties. It is thus with many terms that convey doctrines of Scripture and have been made in part the subject-matter of prevalent religious creeds. *Atonement* and *Election*, for example, are very generally claimed and often conceded, as doctrines peculiar to the class of Christians denominated Orthodox. The case ought not to stand thus. The views of these doctrines which are taken by different Christians are widely various; but yet all believe that Atonement and Election are, in some sense or other, doctrines of the New Testament. It is, as we think, unwarrantable distortion and contraction of their signification, which makes them synonymous with what are called the *Orthodox* conceptions of them. Every one of us believes in Atonement and Election, as we understand them to be inculcated by the word of God, though, it may be, not as they are represented in the prevalent theology of the Protestant world.

Much thus it is with other terms, not so generally, if ever,

entering into the constitution of religious creeds. Take, for example, the word *Orthodox*, which I have already introduced, though not, as you may have observed, without a protest against the assumption involved in its customary application. What is the true etymological meaning of Orthodoxy? *Correct opinion*. In this sense all men, however heterogeneous their apprehensions of truth, of course consider themselves to be Orthodox. No body of Christians can have just right to arrogate to itself this designation; but, as is often the case, might has taken the place of right, and so the predominant faith, at one time Arian and at another Athanasian, at one time Arminian and at another Calvinist, has called itself Orthodox, and, from courtesy, convenience, or some species of sufferance, its claim has been to a greater or less extent conceded.

So it is, likewise, with other particular designations of Christians. The term *Baptist*, as now commonly applied, involves the assumption, that *immersion* is the only real baptism and therefore other Christians do not baptize. A considerable list of such terms might be presented, had we space to consider them.

Let us turn to another sort of phraseology. *Radicalism*, in its proper etymological significance, denotes simply *going to the root of things*; which is a very desirable faculty and characteristic. It has however come to denote generally *the principles and spirit of reckless destruction*; and is therefore in this sense deservedly odious.—*Association* is a term which has lately been adopted, and allowed, to designate *Fourierism*. Now, every one of us believes in the importance of association: the question is as to the kinds, the modes, which are com-

mendable and desirable. The particular development of it which claims to be Association by way of eminence, we may deem nonsense and mischief; but we all cleave to the principle itself.—*Abolition* is a term which has undergone a special degree of contraction. In the first place, it has been arbitrarily pinned upon the subject of *Slavery* in distinction from every other. I say arbitrarily; for we can all see that it is as reasonable *a priori* to apply the word Abolition to any evil as to that of Slavery. Had the subject of Temperance got the start of Slavery in this respect, it would have seemed just as natural that the present advocates of Temperance should be called Abolitionists, because they wished to abolish Intemperance, as it now does that the word should be applied with its present scope. Clearly we may seek to *abolish* almost any thing, and, so far as that particular thing goes, we may, if we please, call ourselves Abolitionists. The topic of Slavery, however, it is conceded, has acquired by occupation a kind of prescriptive right to the term Abolition. But the contraction has been pushed still further, and with much less warrant. The designation Abolitionist is not allowed, as it ought to be, to all who honestly claim it because they *wish* the abolition of slavery, but only to those who are willing to pursue a particular style of procedure for the accomplishment of this desirable issue.

Of all the terms which have been perverted from their original intent, in the way I have been describing, that of *Temperance* is the most remarkable. The sort of technical signification which it has very generally obtained is extremely narrow. It originally meant *moderation*, and was applicable, as a trait of human character, to every sort of habit, act, thought, or feeling. It has now come, in the first place, to be so restricted by

common usage, that when Temperance is spoken of without qualification, we at once understand it as referring to the use of intoxicating liquor for a beverage. In the second place, the term really seems to have lost its *essential* purport; since, instead of denoting *moderation*, it is very generally employed to signify *total abstinence*.

The Sacred Scriptures, of course, do not exhibit any acquaintance with the singularities of phraseology which we have been considering. The text is designed to convey a commendation of Temperance; but, we must observe, the term is used in its original, unsophisticated, most substantial sense, of *moderation*; and it is in this sense that I propose to make Temperance the theme of our reflections on this occasion.

The passage which furnishes the text likens the career of human duty to a race; and represents it as requisite that "every man that striveth for the mastery" in this race, i. e. is solicitous to make the utmost possible progress in Christian duty, should be "temperate in all things." The chief purpose of the present discourse is, to bring the scriptural principle of Temperance into juxtaposition with some movements now on foot in the community, that we may rightly estimate their character, and decide whether they are not mischievously, because intemperately, managed.

The sense of the text is substantially the same as that of the precept communicated by Paul to the Philippians (4: 5.): "Let your moderation be known unto all men." Temperance in all things implies a noble temperance of soul, in comparison with which temperance in drink is of small moment, being related to the former as a slight part to the great whole. The total temperance enjoined in the text extends to food, as well

as every kind of drink, to dress, to speech, to the acquisition of property ; in fine, not to particularize further, to every species of human action and sentiment.

The Temperance we have in view is not at all of kin to indifference. It may boast of close alliance with prudence and reason. It does not hinder genuine reform ; it assists it. It even countenances agitation ; insisting, however, that agitation shall be conducted upon right principles. Excitement, in itself considered, ought not to be condemned. Mankind cannot live without it. We have excitement in trade, in politics, in amusement ; and who thinks it ought to be eliminated from these ? Is not earnestness excitement ? Earnestness is the soul of all achievement. The kind of excitement may sometimes be censurable ; but excitement of some sort or other we must have, or the world would not go on. Nor could there be any valid dissatisfaction with excitement in religion or in any particular reform, were the excitement of a Christian character, to whatever degree of warmth it might ascend. We have the authority of Paul (Gal. 4: 18.) for declaring it " good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." The pursuit of right ends by right means merits the epithet *temperate*, however earnest it may be. Intemperate zeal is a zeal that transcends the limits set by truth, righteousness, and sound discretion. " They zealously affect you," says Paul to the Galatians (4: 17.), " but not well." There is a large amount of intemperate zeal in every great community. Feeling, with many, has stronger sway than reason. The vision of reason is often dimmed by feeling. Language is employed by some, which seems suited to uphold trust in feeling independently of logic. But, if hot feeling be wrongly founded, or in any way injudi-

ciously displayed, a little cold logic may be of essential service to set matters right. That feeling is undesirable which has not its root in truth. The perception of truth facilitates a proper regulation of the heart.

Zeal, whether right or wrong, has power. Whether right or wrong, it is likely to be eloquent. In many of the so-called philanthropic movements that induce stir at the present day, a zeal is exhibited, which, though often eloquent, and in a degree forcible, appearing especially forcible when it encounters weak material, is ignorant, intemperate, deleterious. At one time it ascribes the heavy sin of "him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not" to him who is unaware that he is doing anything amiss. At another it overlooks the just responsibility of the wrong-doer, and lays the whole blame of his transgression upon society. This sort of zeal is ready with imputation of the basest motives to practices or principles which it condemns. Shakspeare makes Othello tell Iago: "Give thy worst of thoughts the worst of words." These enthusiasts of whom we are speaking entertain very bad thoughts concerning those who do not agree with them, and give their very bad thoughts expression by means of very bad words. Their bitter raging speech is levelled not only against those who do the wrong things which their reform particularly assails, but also against all who cherish feelings of charity towards such transgressors. They display a perpetual air of exasperation. They can never imagine the possibility of good motives in any dissent from them. They commit, to quote the great dramatist again, "most mischievous foul sin in chiding sin." They are flagrantly censorious. If they would seek for good motives to the acts of others half as diligently as they seem to seek for

bad, they would show themselves better Christians. They appear to allow no weight to Christ's precept: "Judge not that ye be not judged;" nor to his declaration as to the principle which he himself practised notwithstanding his peculiar endowments: "If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world but to save the world," and again, "I judge no man." If men do not accord with them, it is, for instance, necessarily because they are so anxious to make money, or in some way to gratify a base selfishness. The case is one of dollars *versus* duty, cotton *v.* conscience, ruin *v.* righteousness, gain *v.* godliness, Mammon *v.* the Messiah, glory *v.* the Gospel. Their opponents, they assert, 'care more for the freedom of trade than the freedom of men; more for a tariff than millions of souls.' Or, it is fear, not Christian prudence, which actuates those who do not concur with them; they are careful not to show 'more Christianity than it is popular to have;' they have "chains upon them, not iron chains;" or lastly, in some most delectable language of this sort, 'their heads are crazed and their hearts rotten.'

These persons stoutly object to any fellowship with the wrong-doer, whatever may be the dispositions with which the wrong is done, however unintentional and conscientious its commission. The precept: "Neither be partaker of other men's sins," they seem to construe thus: Have nothing to do with the sinner; and so they would exclude from their communion him who doeth ill ignorantly, alike with him who knoweth to do good and yet doeth it not. They would repudiate all relations of business with either, would treat them harshly, look sternly upon them, and try to awe them out of counte-

nance. If such principles were logically carried out, adieu to society. Are not all more or less imperfect and sinful? Do not all more or less disobey even the dictates of conscience? Shall a man's transgressions, especially his ignorant transgressions, debar fellowship and coöperation with him in any thing good or innocent? Do these very enthusiasts apply such rigid doctrine in winnowing the fit from the unfit among the advocates of their "cause?"

It is actually ludicrous to observe the imperiousness with which these persons assume that, on the topics in question, they are light itself, and in them is no darkness at all; the complacency with which some of them babble about lifting the community up to their 'higher platform.' To me, I admit, their platform appears very narrow and inferior. In my judgment their souls are swathed with tight bandages of bigotry.

The Intemperance which I have been depicting is fraught with very serious evils; evils often worse even than those against which it is directed. We will examine more particularly some of the chief forms in which this spirit is developed.

I. There is Intemperance of sentiment and procedure upon the subject of SLAVERY. In a broad sense of the designation, I am not ashamed to declare myself an Abolitionist. I wish that slavery of man to man might be extirpated from the earth; and would do every thing I can, righteously and wisely,

to fulfil my wish. I do not believe that the evil which slavery occasions in these United States has been, or in itself considered can be, overstated. It is impossible to gauge it thoroughly. But, though not *overstated*, except comparatively, it may very easily be *misstated*. It often is. Some points in the system are exaggerated. Some wrong coloring is imposed. Extraordinary occurrences are taken as keys to the usual condition of things. Above all, the characters, motives, and sentiments of slaveholders, and of those who maintain charity towards them, are grossly misrepresented and improperly vilified. The manner in which slaveholders as a class are treated is flagrantly unjust. They are charged with atrocious criminality for what they do not see to be wicked. Whatever it be that blinds them, habit, interest, prejudice of any description, they are blinded; as truly so as was John Newton, while continuing to pursue the traffic in slaves after his conversion, or Paul, while engaged in his persecution of the Christians, for which he says he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief. But all such ignorance of duty appears to go for nothing with the intemperate people whom we are discussing. The Southern slaveholders are, as a class, subjected to the coarsest contumely ever emitted against the most heinous criminals; and large measure of the same treatment is bestowed upon those who discountenance the excesses which they cannot but deem to be seriously mischievous. Such violent procedure would be very impolitic, even were it merited; its injustice makes it doubly impolitic. The legitimate end of all movement on this subject is, to procure freedom for the slave. This end is not promoted by such means as those I have been censuring. On the contrary, the abolition of slavery

in these United States I firmly believe to be more remote now than it would have been were it not for the intemperate assaults which have been made upon the system and its upholders.

I know it is sometimes said by persons worthy of respect, that those who have conducted these assaults, even the most hare-brained and headlong leaders, have done good, have caused reflection, have elevated public sentiment. What I shall say of intemperate zeal on this subject will be apposite to it on any other which we may hereafter consider. I do not believe that on the whole we are to covet the presence and agency of madmen who make it their business to cast abroad firebrands, arrows, and death in the community. If there be any vocation which is harmful, this is one. It may be doubted whether public sentiment, taking the Union together, is any truer as to slavery than it was twenty years ago. But suppose it be. Are we to leave out of the account the natural progress of truth on every subject which gravely concerns man's interest and duty? It is notwithstanding these exceptionable things, and not because of them or by their aid, that truth has been supported. Who will venture to affirm, that a more temperate procedure on the subject of slavery would not have diffused correct sentiment with more ease and efficiency? Were you to see some massive marine bulwark battered away by the thunder-strokes of old ocean, would you say it was the froth and foam of the yesty waves that effected its destruction? Better say that, than attribute the progress of truth to fanaticism.

Reference is sometimes made to Luther's character, in justification of rough and abusive demeanor. It is said, he was just the man for the times in which he lived. My Hearers,

the best man for any times is a completely Christian man. So far as Luther's character was unchristian, it is a pity it was not different. Luther, with all his imperfections, did much for the welfare of mankind; he would have done more without them. His scurrility and violence did no good; he did good in spite of them. It is a misfortune, that the prominent agents in every scheme of reformation are so apt to be vehement and intemperate.

The North and the South of our country have of late been getting more and more at variance. Their further alienation is likely from the tendencies of the times. The fanatics of the North have consolidated the South in maintenance of slavery, and now point to this consolidated maintenance of it, in order to perpetuate, extend, and strengthen northern fanaticism. No doubt the South merits censure; but it ought not to be considered as incurring censure without provocation. It is hampered, disquieted, fretted, by the system of slavery itself; and unwise and unwarrantable meddling with that system has goaded its upholders to extreme unreasonableness and injustice. Our Southern fellow-citizens must be accosted in a conciliatory and proper manner, if we would benefit the slave. The first thing to be secured is a change of temper on their part. When a person is in a passion you cannot reason with him. No more can you reason with a community which are in the same lamentable plight. The larger part of the people at the North have hitherto kept themselves cool. Insults from a few have nettled the feelings of the South, and the attitude it has lately taken is peculiarly unjustifiable and affrontive. We of the North are now all in great peril of abandoning good temper. We had better retain it still. Will a dissolution of

the Union occasion any desirable results? How can it benefit the slave?

But what are we to do? Nothing? Is our mission silence? I cannot think so. Whatever power is attainable by us, in righteous and judicious ways, for the removal of slavery from the United States, we are bound to exert. We have no right to be silent on such a subject, while others of our community are engaged in improper demonstrations. We should not thus succumb to the fanaticism we disapprove. I cannot but think that what is called the conservatism of the North has been, especially in the pulpit, too near silence and inaction. We ought to speak out against intemperate demeanor, and show the people of the South that, though we abhor slavery, we abhor also unholy tactics against it. For my part I solemnly avow, that I feel a heavier responsibility for the bitter spirit against slaveholders, which rages right around my own residence, than I do for the distant system of slavery itself. We should use our influence, such as it is, solidly but temperately, the more solidly because temperately, against both. For the sake of the slave, more than for any other consideration, we should do what we can, by example and exertion, to restrain the wildfire flame of fanaticism. Be temperate in all things. Be temperate as to the subject of *Slavery*.

II. There is Intemperance of sentiment and procedure upon the subject of INTEMPERANCE narrowly so called. All who are accustomed to drink intoxicating liquors, however moderately,

are vehemently reviled. The moderate drinker of them is indeed stigmatized as worse than the drunkard. The sale of them, at wholesale as well as at retail, men have the effrontery to class expressly with the most enormous crimes. Can this course be equitable? Can it effect any good? I avow myself a hearty friend to Temperance. I am so in practice, to a greater extent than many a person who ranks high among its professed adherents. But I cannot think that the virtue of Temperance is to be promoted by a spirit of intemperance on the part of its advocates. Restrictions and regulations as to men's habits of life are delicate matters, that demand especial caution and wisdom. Most peculiarly is this the case, perhaps, as to articles of food and drink. Can we reasonably expect to convince men that it is wrong to use intoxicating liquors at all as a beverage by harshly denouncing the habit? Can we expect to dissuade men from continuing the traffic in these articles by ranking them with 'thieves, robbers, house-burners and other poisoners?' Harshness is not the best weapon for the purpose. The drinkers and venders of ardent spirits may very naturally say, in the language of Shakspeare: "Your gentleness shall force, more than your force move us to gentleness." Give up your menaces, your imputation of unmitigated baseness in motives to the traffic—in fine, your egregious intemperance of assault upon the characters of those who drink or sell intoxicating liquors; and you will attain higher success than as yet has visited your efforts. It is to be feared that your "cause," as you term it, will always be retrograde as now, instead of onward, if your tone does not become less despotic and vituperative. Be temperate in all things. Be temperate as to the subject of *Intemperance*.

III. There is Intemperance of sentiment and procedure upon the subject of WAR. Many, not content with the declaration, that war is a tremendous evil, to be deprecated by every body, and never to be incurred except to avoid evil yet greater, have the hardihood to assert, without qualification, that war can never be necessary or justifiable, that it is always sin in both parties. Now this is very intemperate sentiment. It is clearly a supposable case, that one nation may set before another the inevitable alternative of war or extirpation. Should it prefer extirpation? There is a broad distinction between wars offensive and wars defensive. It is true that nations have not observed the distinction as they ought. Many wars have been termed justifiably defensive which were not so. Aim your argument in this direction. Say, if you please, that most wars have been heinously unnecessary and wrong; for you will say truth. Point out the folly of this or that pretence for war. Trace its origin, if you can justly and wisely, in covetousness of fame or territory, in political intrigue, or in any other improper impulse. But attempt not to prove that no possible contingency will justify war. You cannot do it. The logic with which you set about such proof must be based upon the extremest principles of what is called non-resistance. If you can show that we are not at liberty to repel injury in any case whatever, you can show that war is in itself a sin: not otherwise. The principles which are promulgated by many require logically the abolition of all civil government, and of all punishment or restraint of wrong-doing.

Suppose even that an umpire-tribunal, a Congress of Nations, or any other accredited resort of jurisdiction concerning differences between nations, were actually established, and,

upon appeal to its authority, one of the parties to a difference were to prove refractory as to a decision of the tribunal, how should that decision be enforced? Such contumacy is plainly within the limits of possibility, and would certainly exhibit itself, I think, in the lapse of time, if it were not repressed by the sanction of force. Indeed, notwithstanding the existence of that sanction, actual war might become necessary in maintenance of jurisdiction. It is desirable that such a tribunal should be instituted. It would undoubtedly adjust many differences between nations in the best possible manner. But, in the last resort, under extraordinary emergencies at least, you must concede the right of force in the relation of country to country, as in the relation of government to its subjects, or of individual to individual. Do all you can to diminish the frequency of war, even to banish it from the earth; but remember, you will procure no success by putting forth effort on unsuitable grounds.

Much is made of the expense incurred by war. This is indeed vast; and I suppose it is thought that consideration of it will be specially weighty with our thrifty community. It is declared that our old Revolutionary War cost '\$270,000,000.' Has it ever been computed how much this country gained by it? Is not the computation so immense as to be beyond achievement? It is said that the money we spend for ships and forts and soldiers and munitions of war would support a magnificent establishment of schools and colleges and libraries. But, if provision of government-force be indispensable, (as I think it is,) the cost of such necessary force is nothing to the purpose of its condemnation. What would you think of dispensing with our police, our prisons, our courts of justice, be-

cause of the great expenditures which they involve, and devoting the avails of your misplaced economy to popular education? Be temperate in all things. Be temperate as to the subject of *War*.

IV. There is Intemperance of sentiment and procedure upon the subject of POVERTY and related or attendant social inequalities.

Poverty is an evil. No doubt covetousness often grinds the faces of the poor with pitiless atrocity. No doubt the wants and welfare of the poor are not in general sufficiently regarded. I would have every change take place which would clearly tend to the diminution of poverty. I would have legislation divested of partiality. I would have the grievousness of indigence assuaged by liberal beneficence from the hand of wealth. But the way in which this subject is often treated can do no good. Poverty is not always, if generally or ever, the fault of society. Still less is it the intentional result of selfishness in certain classes. It is impossible that it should be; and yet some talk as if it were. Indolence, improvidence, debility, unavoidable casualties, are at the root of much of the poverty which exists. Where was there ever a community in which less necessary inequality was occasioned by the constitution of society than in our own? National prosperity, from the nature of the case, produces marked inequality, where all are left to rely on their individual measure of ability and good fortune. Out of the lowest depths of poverty have come many of our richest men. Says Cowper:

“ No soil like poverty for growth divine ;
As leanest land supplies the richest wine.”

He who has a vigorous understanding, native tact and quickness, and a resolute will, finds or makes his way clear through a forest of difficulties, (and difficulties in general only ensure his progress,) to the loftiest height of pecuniary distinction. But such considerations do not seem to weigh any thing with some writers. Instead of pointing out in a Christian temper such abuses as most palpably need to be remedied, the tone adopted and maintained as respects our social state is that appropriate to unmitigated and unparalleled enormities. Society (it is declared,) is not Christian in form or spirit ;’ it is even chiefly characterized by ‘ blood and violence,’ and rests ‘ on a basis of selfishness.’ The poor are ‘ a class of men abandoned by the Christians.’ We have even taken pains to ‘ shut them out of our churches.’ Observe ‘ the dirty lanes and by-places into which the pride of Boston has elbowed’ them. Now here, I think, is lamentable intemperance of thought. Undoubtedly the poor are not enough considered, even in Boston. Inculcate, then, as strenuously as you can, more good-will in respect to them. But to say, in this city, so renowned for its munificent charity, that the poor are abandoned by the Christians, is sheer rant and error. As to this matter, if any should say, in the words which Shakspeare puts into the mouth of one of his characters : “ He misses not much,” I should be inclined to use the cool rejoinder which Shakspeare immediately presents : “ No ! he doth but mistake the truth totally.” The poor are not crowded or shut out of our churches. There are few or no churches in this city,

where they would altogether fail to find not only room but welcome. They stay away from them chiefly out of choice.

The prosperous have not, in general, such feelings towards the poor as this strain of remark which I have been censuring implies. Wealth is often discreditably selfish and supercilious; but not always. The direct tendency of such vituperation as that which we have been considering is to inflame useless, mischievous animosity, on the part of the poor against the rich. Sufficient jealousy of the rich exists without such invectives. Least of all should they be heard from the lips of educated men. The duty of the rich should be set before them with fidelity, but not with a tone of savage bitterness. One effect which will probably be produced by the growth of this asperity on the part of the poor, is increased alienation of feeling on the part of the rich as respects the rest of the community, increased indifference and negligence about the claims of charity. Why should we do what will occasion evil and only evil continually? Better teach the poor this truth, that there is not so much difference among men in the happiness arising from outward circumstances as they suppose. Better instil the proper persuasion, that to all men life is necessarily a battle; that riches have their peculiar perplexities, temptations, and disadvantages. Better enforce the conviction that a good man can be happy under any circumstances, a bad man under none. Better encourage the indigent to exert themselves in rising out of their poverty, as many others have, and as they in general may. Do not induce useless repinings. Do not implant or nurture envious, uncomfortable, vindictive sentiments. Do not urge the rich and the poor yet further asunder.

There are those who seem bent upon defending and maintaining the poor man even in his errors. Sloth, unthriftiness, improvidence, they say, are 'Nature speaking through his soul.' His very crimes are termed 'the natural effect of misery' like his, and even 'inevitable.' It is said, 'great nature speaks' out thus against injustice. Criminals, we are told, have more 'fear of God' than the rest of the community, or they would commit wickedness more atrociously than they do. As they are 'overloaded with work,' their transgressions are not blameworthy. The felon and the wanton are the 'victims' of society; the prosperous are its 'foes.' Detestable doctrine to be diffused in our community! Shall we suffer, nay embolden, even exhort, those who sin, to lay the flattering unction to their souls, that the wickedness they do is excusable and unavoidable? Shall they regard their vices altogether as 'the result of education and circumstances?' If they, why not others? Why not the rich? There is as much temptation in prosperity as in adversity; more, if we may believe our Saviour, as some of us do yet. He states it as a thing preëminently difficult, for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. Shall the poor alone be told it is iniquitous that they should be punished, even with loss of reputation, for their misdeeds? that it is only the tyranny of society which visits them with what is called the meed of justice? Words are inadequate to express just abhorrence of such teaching. Be temperate in all things. Be temperate upon the subject of *Poverty* and other social disadvantages.

There is not space on this occasion to enter further into particular topics upon which an intemperate zeal is exhibited by many. The subject is very complex; a thicket of valuable thought. Let me specify some further topics of importance. I might direct minute attention to injudicious fervor in Trade, in Politics, in Religion, and especially, under this last head, to religious *Sectarianism*. But it is already high time that I should seek a conclusion of my discourse.

It is observable, that those who are intemperate upon one of the topics which we have discussed are quite prone to be so upon all of them, and upon every other. They are often furious against whatever stands in their way. "Speaking evil of dignities" is a sin they commit very readily, in spite of the scriptural prohibition. Our rulers, the highest, are unscrupulously, expressly, and habitually represented as hypocrites, knaves, 'fools and traitors.' Fraud, theft, and violence are imputed as their common sins. The revered Washington himself must, if possible, be branded as a liar. Men are called upon to make 'resistance to tyrants;' meaning (will you believe it?) our rightful rulers peaceably elected by the people. We are informed, that the 'Common Law,' that glorious embodiment of truth and justice, 'is based on Might, not Right.' Men are taught 'to think lightly of what is called Treason against a government.' It is represented that, as there is a higher law than that of the Constitution of these United States, viz., the law of God, men ought always to act on their own individual convictions as to what that law of God is. The Constitution is sneered at as 'the tradition of the elders.' The right, it is said, is higher than the expedient. True: but a full view of the expedient may some-

times materially assist us to apprehend better what the right is. The fear of God, it is said, is properly paramount to fear of man. True: but it is one of the laws of God that we should yield due deference to government.

The religious institutions of the day, too, come in for a large share of obloquy. Churches and their ministers are represented to be wholly without experience as to true Christianity, because they fail to think with these self-styled and very self-complacent reformers. The churches are, for this reason, pronounced 'asleep,' 'little better than dead.' It may prevent us from being dejected by such reproaches, to remember that a crazy man naturally thinks one who is sane and sober to be sluggish and sleepy. Churches and theatres are said to be alike beyond remedy. Come see our zeal for the Lord, say these enthusiasts. But, as the sight of their zeal persuades us it is intemperate, we cannot coalesce with them in their measures or their temper. We think they do not show the spirit of Christ. With moral principle for their peculiar watchword, we think they err as to what correct moral principle is. They are men of 'conscience,' they say. We can only reply, we believe that their consciences need more light. "There be some that trouble you," says Peter, "perverting the Gospel of Christ." So, we think, many of those who make much ado about the requirements of Christianity as to these subjects of reform pervert the Gospel of Christ. The Gospel has a great work to accomplish, but not by the methods which many indicate and pursue. A part of its work is to extirpate such methods of influence.

The ideas which I have developed as the strain of this discourse I understand to be the ideas on which this religious

society is based. I have been for years acquiring a deeper and deeper conviction that these ideas are just. With all charity towards those who differ from us, we, in general at least, take a view nearly or quite like that I have presented respecting some popular movements, urged, and no doubt commonly intended, as philanthropic. We are laboring, as a society, under considerable odium, as well as other burthen, from the past. Contention has borne its bitter fruits. We are much misrepresented and misunderstood at this moment. We are supposed to be unfavorable to reform. We avow ourselves the friends of all genuine reform, but demand that its enterprises be conducted in a proper fashion. We seek to be 'temperate in all things.' We have occasion to rely on the countenance of every judicious and good man. We have faith that in time we shall have it. Wisdom is in the end justified of her children. Let us go on calmly but manfully in our work. Tranquillity of soul is a sign of truth and right. When the ship *Great Western*, one of the "oak leviathans" of the deep, was on its passage from Liverpool to New York, in September last, a storm raged most fearfully around it. So tempestuous was the sea, that one side of the huge fabric was raised high in air, with its paddle-wheels fully conspicuous above the waters. Still the *engine* quietly but steadily did its duty, and the vessel was preserved. That lifeless machine may serve to teach us a useful lesson.

